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# THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE OF ART

AN ILLUSTRATED MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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## THE CONVENTION

The seventh annual convention of the American Federation of Arts was held in Washington on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, May 17th, 18th and 19th. The New Willard Hotel was again the headquarters and all of the sessions were held in the small ball room, seating between 250 and 300 persons.

The weather was perfect and the attendance was larger than at any of the previous conventions. Not all of the chapters sent delegates, but the representation was large and general. There was a specially large delegation from Texas. Oklahoma was represented, as were also Oregon, Montana and North Dakota. One delegate came from outside the United States, a representative from the Toronto Art Museum, emphasizing the fact that the Federation is not merely national, but as its name implies truly American.

The entire program as published in the June number of THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE OF ART was carried out. One speaker only was not able to be present—Mr. Grummann, but his paper was read by Miss Grant, and the subject with which he dealt, "Art in the University," was also admirably presented by Professor Pickard, President of the College Art Association of America and Director of Art in the State College of Missouri, who at the eleventh hour very generously consented to take Mr. Grummann's place.

The session on the first afternoon was at-

tended by representatives of the American Association of Museums which held its annual meeting in Washington the same week, and the reception that evening at the National Museum was given by the Secretary and Regents of the Smithsonian Institution in honor of the two organizations.

All of the papers presented at the convention were on an unusually high plane and none who was in attendance could have failed to have been impressed both by the earnestness and the high-mindedness of the speakers. Each was an expert in his or her line—a practical worker in the field of Art, and the viewpoint was that of those of broad-vision. Actualities rather than mere theories were presented.

The keynote of the convention was struck at the opening session by stirring and thoughtful addresses made by Senator Newlands, Mrs. Herbert Adams and Mr. Bossange, and although each session presented the theme of Art for the People from a different standpoint, and, as it were, in a different field, there was throughout evidence of unanimity of purpose.

Attention was drawn to the value of design in industrial products in the exhibition of American Industrial Art set forth in the National Museum under the auspices of the Federation, as well as by papers presented at the morning session on the third day by those actively in touch with work and workers in this field of endeavor.

The value of the contributions made and the services rendered by artists was emphasized in the Memorial Meeting held in commemoration of the life and service of the late John W. Alexander on the evening of May 18th in the auditorium of the Corcoran Gallery of Art. The addresses made at this meeting are for the most part published in this number of THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE OF ART, but the spirit which pervaded the meeting and the inspiration emanating from the exhibition of Mr. Alexander's paintings in an adjacent gallery can not be transmitted through the medium of print. Mrs. Edward MacDowell was the last speaker on the program, and at the conclusion of her address she played the "Largo" from the "Sonata Tragica" and also the "Wild Rose," both exquisite compositions peculiarly appropriate to the occasion.

Lunch each day was served in a private dining-room at the hotel and these luncheons were made convention affairs giving the delegates opportunity for informal conferences and better acquaintance. In the way of social entertainments, teas were given the delegates by Mrs. William M. Ritter and Mrs. Christian Hemmick, and on the second afternoon the delegates were invited to a garden party at the Octagon, the headquarters of the American Institute of Architects and the home of the Federation.

The convention as a whole was both educational and inspiring. It is only fair to note, however, in this particular, that those in attendance contributed quite as much to the result as did the program, despite its excellence. To find so many from all parts of the United States so deeply interested in the development and progress of art was in itself both a revelation and an impetus, and that from so widespread an interest large and beneficial results will accrue can not be doubted. The majority of the papers and addresses will be published during the coming year in *THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE OF ART*.

### THE DINNER

The convention was fittingly concluded on the evening of the 19th by a dinner attended by 330 persons, at which special stress was laid upon the value of The Arts. Mr. Robert W. de Forest presided and the speakers were: Mr. Cass Gilbert, Mr. William M. Chase, Mr. Herbert Adams, Mr. Alfred Noyes and Mr. Horatio Parker.

In speaking of architecture, Mr. Cass Gilbert emphasized the fact that design should have a very definite relation to the usage of the building. "Architecture," he said, "is a form of expression—it is a language. I think we should use its fullest development, its highest ideals of expression, its scholarly qualities to express our needs today." He reminded his hearers that architecture is the great recorder of history and that in just so far as what we do is serious, definite, purposeful and right, will the results be splendid.

Mr. William M. Chase, speaking for painting, declared himself "a member of the most magnificent profession that the world knows," calling to mind pictures by

the great masters in the famous museums. He insisted, however, that all good pictures are well made—thoroughly well made—and urged strongly the acceptance of this conviction, which to a great extent disposes of the works of the so-called modernist. Mr. Chase expressed himself of the belief that the only way to know art was to see it, but he wisely recommended that one should not force a work upon oneself, but rather accept as much as one finds in it, gradually acquiring taste and discrimination. The motto, he said, which he would have carved deeply in stone over the door of every great museum was "These works are for your pleasure and not for your criticism."

Speaking of sculpture, Mr. Herbert Adams deplored the tendency of the average citizen or citizens' committee to erect portrait statues as public monuments and to have such monuments placed conspicuously regardless of suitability of site. "My feeling is," he said, "that a monument should be something more than an artistic representation of a man in an ugly suit of clothes." "In art as in dress," Mr. Adams said, "America has always been influenced by the fashions of Europe. The question now is, will those in Europe at the close of this great war be inspired by nobler visions, and will there be a nobler form of expression or will the destructive influences of warfare have a blighting effect upon Europe for a generation to come."

Mr. Alfred Noyes, referring to the technique of poetry, echoed what Mr. Chase had said about painting and declared that the tendency to disregard workmanship has in late years led our makers of literature into a method of evading difficulties instead of conquering them. "It has led us," he said, "into free verse and all the other devices for admitting the mediocre artist into the Olympian circles." Touching upon the spiritual, he said, "The whole business of poetry is to set the temporal in relation to the eternal." "Modern realism," he added "is supposed to be getting down to the facts of life, whereas, instead it is merely getting down to the superficial facts of death." "Shakespeare in his tragedies," he declared, "asserted the supremacy of the individual soul over the physical universe." "Is it not an inspiring thought," he asked his audience, "that the strongest link between